

# RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

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Vol. XXVI

JULY, 1933

No. 3

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68 WATERMAN STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER, *President* GILBERT A. HARRINGTON, *Treasurer*  
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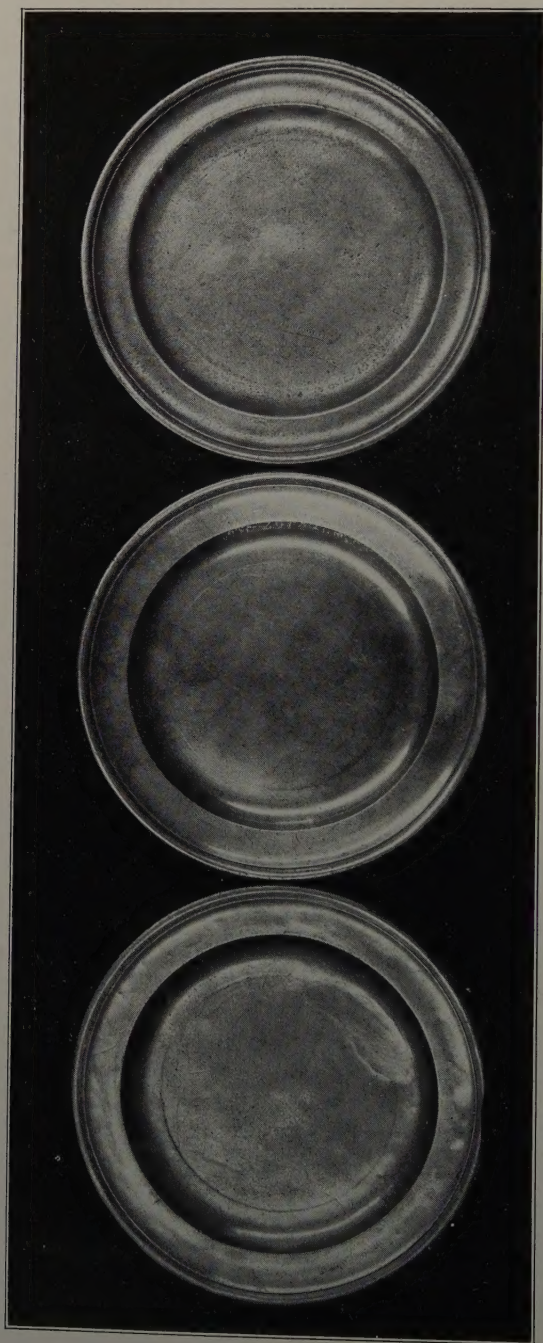
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The Touch-Mark of Josiah Keene,  
Rhode Island Pewterer, 1778 or 9-1868

By MADELAINE R. BROWN, M.D.

Until the plate described below was located in the autumn of 1932, no example of Josiah Keene's larger touch-mark was known to collectors of American pewter. A pint porringer of the Rhode Island type, marked "I. K.," described and attributed to him in Mr. Myer's "Notes," is now in the Yale University Museum. From Mr. Calder's exhaustive study of Rhode Island pewterers published in 1924 by this quarterly, we know that Keene advertised as pewterer, coppersmith and founder in the *Providence Gazette*, October 2, 1802. The same author has also reproduced a receipt given William Calder, pewterer, by Josiah Keene in 1817 for seven varieties of moulds, including one for an eight-inch plate and one for a pint porringer.





8 1/4 INCH PEWTER PLATES MADE BY

JOSIAH KEENE

WILLIAM CALDER

GERSHAM JONES

This  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inch plate, bearing part of Keene's touch, is in such excellent condition that it could have been used very little. It is evident, therefore, that originally this mark was only partially struck. The touch is similar to that of Samuel Hamlin, and from the accompanying illustration it will be seen that the  $8\frac{1}{4}$  inch plate by Gershom Jones was cast in an indential mould, and that by William Calder probably in the same mould.



TOUCH-MARK OF  
JOSIAH KEENE

The scarcity of known examples of Keene's pewter to-day may possibly be explained by two facts. First, his touch-mark may have been incompletely struck on much of his ware. Second, as Mr. Laughlin points out in the article on Keene from the manuscript of his projected book on American pewter, which he has kindly sent me, Josiah Keene was essentially a coppersmith and brass founder, making pewter only in the first few years of his business life, and finally selling his moulds in 1817.

## Biscuit City

By WILLIAM DAVIS MILLER

Biscuit City, or Harley's Mill as it is sometimes more accurately but less picturesquely called, has the probable distinction of being the smallest city in the country. The little cluster of houses, never appearing to have exceeded more than six in number exclusive of the mill, grouped about the "Great Spring" and the stream and mill pond fed by its unfailing flow, lies about a mile to the southwest of the village of Kingston.

The origin of the name of this small hamlet is obscure but by tradition, and as recorded by Shepard Tom in his *Jonny Cake Papers*, it sprang from the imagination of an itinerant vendor, who, upon a visit to the little community, was so impressed by the remarkable number of biscuits being made by the housewives, that he dubbed it by the name it has ever since borne, and by which it is familiarly alluded to by the people of South Kingstown.

The lands upon which Biscuit City stood were in the central portion of that great tract purchased from the Narragansett Sachems by the Pettaquamscutt Purchasers in 1657. They in turn deeded to William Knowles, in 1671, five hundred acres of this Purchase, which included the lands under consideration. The Knowles family retained possession until 12 April 1738 when Henry Knowles sold two hundred acres to Col. Elisha Reynolds, merchant of Little Rest. The following year Reynolds purchased an additional four hundred acres from Henry Knowles, apparently the remainder of Knowles lands in that vicinity. It would appear that this last purchase, made 12 March 1739, included the spring and stream. In this deed there is mention of a house but no mention of a mill, the house being probably that, the ruins of which still remain, situated a short distance to the northwest of the mill site.



On 18 August 1788 Elisha Reynolds sold sixteen acres and twenty-eight rods to John Larkin. This would seem to be the beginning of the mercantile era of the "City," for while the deed mentions "a dwelling house there on standing," mentions the "Great Spring at the head of the Mill Pond," and gives to Larkin right to "open the brook that comes from Samuel Tefts land across sd grantors land" no direct mention is made of a mill. However when, on 25 May 1795, Larkin sold these lands to John Taylor Nichols, the saddler of Little Rest, whose shop adjoined the old Bank in the village, the land is described as "with a dwelling house and a Grist Mill thereon standing." Larkin bought an additional four acres adjoining his land on the east from Elisha Reynolds in 1791.

Nichols operated the mill less than two years selling out to Jonathan Babcock, "Schoolmaster alias Yoeman," on 21 February 1797. Nichols, however, retained the upper portion of the mill pond and the "Great Spring" but bound himself "Not to alter the course or Stop the water which Runs from the great Spring into the Mill Pond and all other water Courses which Vent it Selfe into Said Pond and to Drownd as much of the land which Belongs to Said Nichols as May happen at any Uncommon Rise of Water in Said Mill Pond from Freshets or otherwise." This upper portion of the land, ten acres, Nichols sold to Elisha Reynolds Potter in 1801 who in turn, six years later, sold two acres to Babcock.

In 1808, Biscuit City reached the height of its activity and was to achieve additional distinction. On the sixteenth of March of that year, Jonathan Babcock, having laid aside his title of "School Master" and styling himself "Miller," sold four and one-half acres and twenty-five rods of his land, excluding his home, the old house mentioned in the earlier deeds, to "The President, Directors and Company of South Kingstown Cotton Manufactory," said to be the first company to be organized in the United States for the manufacture of cotton cloth. The deed recites the officers



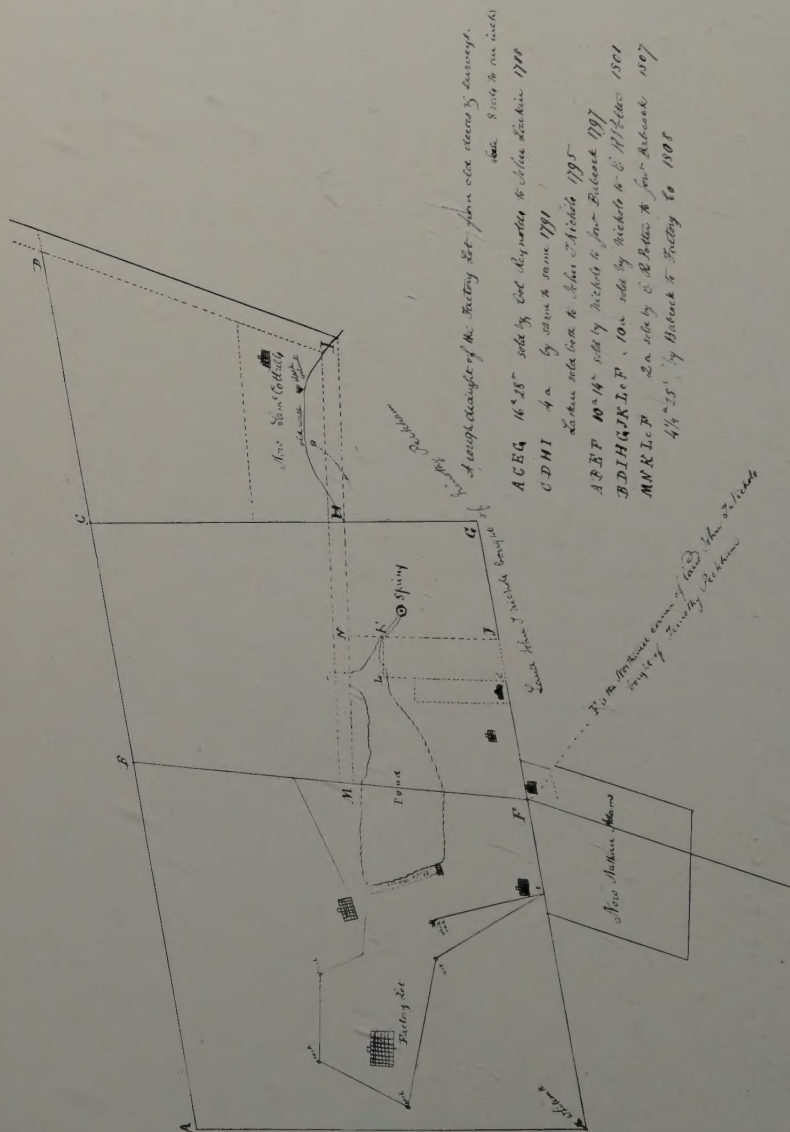
THE BISCUIT CITY MILL.  
*From a water color sketch by Edmund D. Lewis, dated 1887*



as follows: "James Helme President, Rowland Hazard, James Shearman, Cyrus French, William Peckham."

The old approach to Biscuit City and the mill was by a right of way across the lands of Elisha Reynolds, later in possession of Elisha Reynolds Potter, at the western foot of Little Rest Hill, leaving the road to the present West Kingston at a point adjacent to where that road crosses Whitehorn Brook. In 1809, Potter deeded "the copartners & proprietors of the Cotton Factory" a piece of land to be "used and occupied as a road or public highway across the lands of the grantor" the consideration being that the Company release the old right of way to Potter. This road was laid out and is the present approach to Biscuit City. This deed is of interest as it gives a more complete list of those interested in the South Kingstown Cotton Manufactory (alias The Cotton Factory, alias the Narragansett Cotton Manufacturing Company): "Levi Bradford, Hezekial Babcock, Jonathan Babcock, John G. Clarke, Cyrus French, Elisha R. Gardner, Benj<sup>n</sup> Greene, Rowland Hazard, James Helme, Joseph M. Knowles, Robert Knowles, Geo Hazard, John T. Nichols, Wm. Nichols, Wm. Peckham, Wm. Peckham, Jr., James Sherman, John R. Sherman, John Segar, Chr. Robinson, Borden Rathbun, Benj<sup>n</sup> Wright, Elisha Watson, Jr., Jos. Reynolds, Benjn Congdon & John C. Helme being the copartners & proprietors—"

For eleven years the Cotton Factory, to use the shortest of the several names, would appear to have continued operation with diminishing success, and then sold, on 2 January 1819, the land it had received from Babcock to Rouse C. Clarke, Jr., of Richmond "with a large building thereon with water wheels & other wheels & gear viz: all the geer that is immediately connected with the wheels, two dwelling homes & other out buildings." The consideration the Company received would seem indicative of their financial condition. It was "the sum of two thousand dol-



## BISCUIT CITY

(From "a rough draught" made by Judge Elisha R. Potter.)

lars paid the cashier of the Narragansett Bank to our use being part of the debt due to sd Bank from sd Company."

After the sale to Clarke the land transfers became complicated and the lands were divided into small holdings, causing one amusing situation wherein Clarke in 1820 owned the door yeard of the old house still occupied, apparently, by Jonathan Babcock. This was restored to Babcock, however, in 1824 by formal deed duly recorded. Clarke operated the old mill not for textiles but for the manufacture of carriages and wagons. He sold out to Asa Potter on 10 June 1829, having previously sold some of the land to Elisha Reynolds Potter, who owned the land surrounding the "City." Clarke deeded "lock, stock and barrel" for the deed lists a remarkable number of carriages and wagons, completed and unfinished, together with the tools and gear necessary to their manufacture.

On 11 November 1830 Asa Potter sold the Mill property by auction, the successful bidders being Solomon S. Harley and George C. Clarke. Harley operated the mill as a grist mill for many years and on 23 May 1866 the land, "with a grist mill—formerly known as the Narragansett Factory," having come to John Henry Wells and his wife, partly by inheritance, partly by purchase and partly by exchange, was conveyed to Judge Elisha Reynolds Potter, great grandson of Elisha Reynolds, who had purchased it over a hundred years before. It remained in the Potter family until recently when the "Great Spring" was utilized as an auxiliary source to the water supply for the village of Kingston and the lands immediately adjacent were acquired by a Company formed for this purpose.

With the old mill and the Jonathan Babcock house in ruins, with only two of the other houses standing and with the "Great Spring" diverted to other uses, Biscuit City is now but a name and a memory.



## New Publications of Rhode Island Interest

*History and Genealogy of the Ancestors and Some Descendants of Stukely Westcott* by Roscoe L. Whitman is a volume of 435 pages, published by the Otsego Pub. Co., Oneonta, N. Y.

The *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* for April 1933, contains the translation of several letters and papers relating to the French forces in Rhode Island during the Revolution and also an account of P. F. Little, the Little Compton printer.

*Negroes on the Island of Rhode Island* by Charles A. Battle is a pamphlet of 38 pages published at Newport, in 1932.

*Obadiah Holmes, Ancestor and Prototype of Abraham Lincoln* by Rev. Wilbur Nelson is a pamphlet of 20 pages printed at Newport, in 1932.

*Letter of Instructions to the Captain and the Supercargo of the Brig "Agenoria," Engaged in a Trading Voyage to Africa*, in 1832 and 1833, with other papers connected with the voyage, is a pamphlet of 46 pages privately printed for Howard Greene of Milwaukee, and Arnold G. Talbot of Philadelphia. The *Agenoria* was a Providence vessel.

The *Mariner* for January 1933, contains the articles of agreement for the building of a ship at Warren, R. I., in 1747.

*The Letters of Eleazar Wheelock's Indians*, published by Dartmouth College, contains over thirty pages of letters written by Narragansett Indians from 1765 to 1778.

*Antiques* for April 1933, contains an illustrated article by Ruel P. Tolman on *Other Malbone Miniatures*.

*Historic Newport* is an attractive and interesting illustrated booklet recently issued by the Newport Chamber of Commerce.

Volume 1 of *Richmond Family Records* by Henry I. Richmond, M.A., Sc.B., of Little Compton, R. I., has just been published by Adlard & Son, London. It is a volume of 232 pages dealing in exhaustive detail with the Richmonds of Maryland, Virginia, New England, Ireland, and Somerset, England. Mr. Richmond has devoted many years to research relating to the Richmond family.

The May 1933 *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* contains some letters of Samuel Slater, and a letter to Moses Lopez of Newport in regard to the manufacture of potash.

## Notes

The following persons have been elected to membership in the Society:

Mrs. A. L. Grant	Mrs. George E. Downing
Capt. Ernest H. Brownell	Mrs. Alden L. Littlefield
Mr. Horace M. Peck	

## A Short History of Jamestown

By W. L. WATSON

(Continued from page 59)

In the records of the Newport Meeting for the 24th of the 6th month 1788, it is stated that the money raised for building a new meeting house was not sufficient and it was voted that £7-11-5 pence be paid out of the general treasury. It is thus conclusive that the new meeting house, which is the one now standing, was built in 1786 or 1787. And so we have the records of the building which is now standing and which, during the summer months, is still opened for "Quaker Meeting."

So firmly was Quakerism established on the island that, for a period of 132 years after the first meeting house was built, no other religious sect had a place of worship, although Dr. McSparron made frequent visits and held services of the Church of England in private residences, particularly those of Capt. Paine, Bro. Arnold and Mr. Martin.

After holding services in the old North School House for some time the first Baptist Society built their meeting house in 1841-2, and an agreement appears on their records whereby they allowed the Seventh Day Baptists to use it. This little meeting house still stands on the North Road just south of Carr's Lane. The church on Narragansett Avenue, which is now used, was built in 1891, by the Central Baptist Society.

In 1836 there was only "one person on the island in communication with the Episcopal Church." In 1837 the parish was admitted to the Episcopal Union. The Rev. Edward Wayland was the first minister. In 1878 Rev. Dr. Magill of Trinity Church, Newport, took it as a mission and in 1896 it became an independent congregation.

In 1890 the Roman Catholic Church celebrated its first mass at the Thorndyke Hotel. For fourteen years the parish was continued as a mission of St. Mary's Church, Newport. In 1909 it was established as a permanent parish.

But now we must retrace our steps somewhat. In sketching the various activities and growth of the town, it has undoubtedly been noticed that every one of them suffered by the Revolutionary War. This was the most critical as well as the most disastrous period in the town's history.

From 1730 to just before the war, it must be remembered, Newport was at the height of its prosperity, surpassing New York as a commercial center. Over 200 vessels were engaged in foreign trade and over 400 coasting vessels sailed from this harbor as well as a regular line of packets to London. Thousands of seamen thronged the docks, warehouses were overflowing, there were 17 manufacturers



alone of sperm oil and candles, vast fortunes were made in the slave trade and the distilling of rum, and ship yards were scattered all along the shores of the bay. Wealth was abundant and prosperity every man's portion. Jamestown could not help but share in this general condition and was alert to better her condition, as is shown in the following vote of the town meeting of December 26, 1767.

"It is voted that the Hon. Josiah Arnold Esq. William Hazard Esq. Oliver Hull Esq. Mr. Daniel Weeden, Mr. John Weeden, Capt. John Eldred, Capt John Gardner, & Mr. John Remington or the major part of them, be, & they hereby are appointed a committee to consider of the most Salutary measures to be Recommended to this town; for encouraging Industry, frugality, & the Manufactures of this colony, as well to Discourage the use of British & foreign Manufactures and Superfluities imported from abroad; & that they make Report of their proceedings to this meeting which stands adjourned to the third Tuesday of January next."

Here we also have a public expression of dissatisfaction over British authority. Jamestown was surrounded by shipping. High import taxes, particularly on molasses, had made smuggling a common practice. Encounters between trading vessels and British excise vessels were frequent. Respect for British enforcement of law was at a low ebb. Slowly but surely the undercurrents of resistance were converging into a mighty stream.

On February 10, 1774, the records read:

"Considering the Greate importance in Preserving to ourselves & Posterity our Indubitable & Inherent Rights do Vote and it is Voted and Resolved by this Meeting that for preventing any tea subject to a duty sent out by the East India Company being Landed in this town, we do Willingly and heartily Join in the s'd Resolves Containing N.N. nine, and to the utmost of our power will stand by and Support our Brethren in this and the sister Colony's in all such Just and Laudable Measures as may preserve to us our Just Rights and priveledges as Englishmen."

Then on October 16, 1775, it was voted:

"That a Watch be set and kept in this town till further Orders from the town from Six O'Clock in the evening till Sun rise the Next morning that the watch be set and kept from Eldreds Northward Round the Point & if necessary to keep also a strict On the Western Shore from the Point as far down as Opposite s'd Eldgedges Shore."

Then again, fearing serious disaster, it was voted on October 21, 1775, "that the Records of this town be kept in North Kingstown where they now are or in some Other Secure place as the Town Clerk or Council Clerk Shall Think Proper, untill further Order from the town."

Narragansett Bay, with its large amount of shipping, had always been a focal point for the British Revenue ships. In 1769 the armed sloop *Liberty* was sent to Newport from Boston, to enforce the revenue laws. She seized a Connecticut brig and a sloop and brought them into Newport. The indignant citizens managed, by a subterfuge, to get all the *Liberty's* men ashore and then someone went out and cut her cable. She drifted ashore and was later struck by lightning and consumed by fire. In 1772 the *Gaspee* was destroyed. These revenue vessels were a familiar sight from Jamestown and were the reason for establishing the night patrol. The men of the patrol did not always use discretion and occasionally took pot shots at these vessels. So, also, did Capt. John Eldred. The story is told by Field in "Revolutionary Defences of Rhode Island."

"During the Revolution, there lived, on the Eldred Farm, on the east side of Conanicut, Captain John Eldred, a patriot of the purest type. On his land there were two great rocks overlooking the water from a commanding position. Here Captain Eldred planted one of the guns taken from the fort on the island (the battery where Fort Dumpling later stood). From time to time, the patriotic old farmer would amuse himself by firing a shot at the British vessels as they passed up and down the East Passage. One day, he was fortunate enough to put a shot through the mainsail of one of the enemy's ships. This little pleasantry on the part of Farmer Eldred was not relished by the Britisher. A boat was lowered and a force sent ashore to dislodge the company, which, it was supposed, occupied the station, and spike the gun. Upon seeing the boat lowered, Mr. Eldred quickly hid himself in the swamp at the far end of his farm, and when the boat's party arrived on the spot, nothing was found but the gun mounted between the rocks. This they spiked, and the company they expected to capture had vanished as completely as though swallowed up by the earth. This was Eldred's one gun battery."

(The Jamestown Chapter of the D. A. R. is named the "John Eldred Chapter," and a few years ago placed a tablet on one of the rocks.)

Whether it was because of this or out of pure wantonness, on December 11, 1775, the British landed 200 men on the island and proceeded to destroy the village. The account is given in the diary of Ezra Stiles, a minister of Newport.

"Dec. 10, 1775. This morning we were awakened with the conflagration of Jamestown on Conanicut. An awful sight! . The bomb brigg and several Tenders full of marines went over last night, and about v o'clock or a little before day landed and set fire to the Houses. The men continued ravaging and burning 'till about Noon and returned.

"Dec. 11, 1775. About 1 o'clock yesterday morning a Bomb Brig, 1 schooner, & 2 or 3 armed sloops went to Conanicut & landed upward of Two hundred Marines Sailors & Negroes at the E. Ferry and marched in three divisions over to the W. Ferry, & set the several houses on fire there, then retreated back sett fire to almost every house on each side of the road, & several Houses and Barns some distance on the N. & S. side of the Rode, driving out Women & Children etc.

#### Houses Burnt & Lost

Widow Hull - - - - -	1 house
Jos. Clarke, Esq. - - - - -	2 houses & 1 Barn
Thos. Fowler - - - - -	1 house & 1 Crib
Ben. Ellery - - - - -	2houses & 1 Store
Benj. Remington - - - - -	2 houses
Jno. Gardiner - - - - -	2 houses & 1 Tanyard
Gov. Hutchinson - - - - -	1house
Wm. Franklin - - - - -	2 houses
Abel Franklin - - - - -	1house
Bend. Robinson - - - - -	1 house

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#### 15Dwellings

A Company of Minute Men had left Conanicut the Aft. before so that there were but 40 or 50 soldiers on the Island, of which 22 were well equipped. At the Cross Rodes there was a Skirmish our pple killed one Officer of Marines and wounded 7 or 8. Not one Colonist was killed or hurt in the Skirmish. The Kings forces fired on Mr. Jno. Martin aet 80 standing at his Door and wounded him Badly. Mr. Fowler had about 30 Head Cattle: these the Regulars carried off and perhaps a dozen Head more, about 30 Sheep & as many Turkeys, & some Hogs, Beds, Furniture



and other plunder. They returned on board at X or XI o'clock & came to this Harbor about Noon.

The Alarm spread, & I am told there are this day Three hundred Men on Conanicut & Eight hundred upon the Island. The Town in great Consternation.

An account also appeared in the *Providence Gazette*, December 16, 1775, under the heading "The Burning of Jamestown," as follows:

"Sunday morning last, the bomb brig, a schooner, and two or three armed sloops left the harbor of Newport and landed about two hundred marines, sailors and Negroes on the Ferry on the east side of Conanicut, from whence they immediately marched across in three divisions to the West Ferry, and after burning all the houses near the Ferry-Place, returned towards their vessels, setting fire to almost every house on each side of the road, from the West to the East Ferry, and several houses and barns some distance on the North and South side of the road, driving out the women and children, swearing they should be burnt in the houses, if they did not instantly turn out. Captain Wallace commanded. Mr. John Martin, standing unarmed in his own door, was shot. Fifty cows and six oxen, a few sheep and hogs were taken. All were plundered of beds, wearing apparel and household furniture. They left Conanicut the same morning and got back to Newport at Noon."

Every house in the village was destroyed. They confined themselves to the village, however, so the farm houses at the north were saved. General Washington, in a letter written at Cambridge, speaks of "the barbarity of Capt. Wallace on Conanicut Island."

In the spring of 1776 Capt. Wallace and his fleet withdrew from the bay. But for only a short period was this territory to be unmolested. On December 7, 1776, Job Watson, from his watch tower on Tower Hill, saw a large squadron of war vessels coming toward the entrance of Narragansett Bay. They sailed up the west passage, around the north end of the island and anchored along the shores of the Island of Rhode Island, from Portsmouth to Newport Harbor. Eight to ten thousand British and Hessian troops landed and took possession of Newport, and, once again, this little colony on Jamestown was in a desperate

plight. Out of a population of over 600 in 1774, but a little over three hundred remained.

But now there was a demand for men for the army. On September 24, 1776, two men were sent from the island. On November 21, 1776, the General Assembly made a levy of 6 men out of every 100 male inhabitants. The following entry in the town records, December 3, 1776, gives a vivid picture of their condition:

"This Meeting being Conven'd in Obedience to an Act of the General Assembly held at East Greenwich 21 of Nov. 1776, for Raising Six men out of every Hundred of the Male Inhabitants as last Estimated in this town to be sent to the Island of Rhode Island in ten days after the Rising of s'd Assembly to assist in Defending the s'd Island against the Ministerial fleets and armies now at war against the free and Independent States of America. This town Meeting as freemen being Met & Considering their Depopulated Distressed and Defenceless condition toward the Raising Equipping and sending forward s'd men agreeable to said act do at this time Most sensibly regret and find that 'tis out of the power of the town to Raise the Men Required by s'd Act but at the same time are Willing & Desirous to be aiding & assisting in the Defence of Rhode Island, for that Purpose will endeavour to Inlist the six men Required of this town by s'd act equip & send then forward for the Common Defence Speedily as may be agreeable to said act. but if the town in their Now most Calamitous & Distressed Situation find it out of their power to raise s'd men they humbly hope the fine for not Raising Equipping & sending them forward agreeable to s'd act may not be Exacted on the Inhabitants of the town."

As soon as the British started to plan their intrenchments in and around Newport, it was seen it would be necessary to occupy Conanicut so that adequate protection might be obtained on the west. The American forces could assemble in Narragansett on the main land and cross over to Conanicut unmolested. From there they would command the east as well as the west passage to Narragansett Bay and it would be but a short distance to Newport. To prevent this possibility the 54th British Regiment was detailed to occupy the redoubt on the west side of the island (Fox Hill) about two miles north of the light-house (Beaver Tail), which they noted upon entering the bay, had been abandoned by the Americans. War vessels were anchored along the west

coast of the island and also between Conanicut and Prudence Island.

As a further protection a redoubt was erected north east of the narrow beach between Mackerel Cove and Sheffield's Pond. At this redoubt barracks to accommodate 50 men and officers were built. Still another redoubt or fort was erected later at the Dumplings which commanded the east passage. These fortifications were fully equipped with cannon, and a detachment of troops, frequently Hessians, were stationed there. At one time two battalions were stationed on the south end of the island at Beaver Tail, but no evidence has been found that any fortifications were ever erected there.

On December 9, 1777, a detachment of 50 men was stationed on the island to cut wood for the troops in Newport. A transport was anchored near the ferry. Here the troops slept and when landing in the morning they were ordered to take their arms with them. This work continued until every tree available for fire wood had been cut down.

In July, 1778, word was received that the French fleet had set out for Newport to join the American forces in an attack on the British Army entrenched at Newport. All the fortifications on Conanicut were strengthened and more men stationed there. On July 29th, the French fleet appeared off the entrance to the bay. Had they immediately landed forces on Conanicut they could have captured the entire British force stationed there, but instead, they remained at anchor off Beaver Tail for several days. In the meantime the British withdrew their troops and the evacuation was so precipitate that they spiked the cannon at Fox Hill and those at the Dumplings, two 24 pounders, were thrown down the rocks into the sea.

The delay of the French was fatal. While they were still anchored off shore word was received that a British fleet had sailed from New York. They soon appeared and the French fleet immediately set all sail after them. Both fleets quickly passed out of sight beyond the horizon. A severe storm arose and the vessels became separated, all

being badly damaged by the wind and waves. No decisive encounter occurred, and after several days a badly crippled French fleet appeared in the harbor, but they soon set sail for Boston to repair the damage done by the storm. In the meantime the attack on Newport from the north by the Americans failed and the British again were in unchallenged possession of the town. Troops were again stationed at the fortifications on Conanicut.

To give a comprehensive account of the part Jamestown took in this period it would be necessary to follow the movements of the American British and French forces. This space forbids, but the foregoing gives an idea of the strategic position of the island.

After having occupied the island for four years the British departed in 1779. The following winter was the most severe ever experienced. So impoverished were the inhabitants, they were compelled to call for outside assistance.

In July of the following year the French fleet, under Admiral de Ternay came to Newport. The poverty-stricken people did their best to make their stay pleasant, but even with them there was source of complaint, as is shown in the following entry in the town records for August 19, 1780:

"It is Voted that Messrs. Benjamin Underwood, John Gardner, John Weeden, Benjamin Remington, George Tew, & John Howland be a committee and Prepare an Address to their Excellencies the Count de Rochambeau and the Chavilier de Terney commander of his most Christian majesties fleet in the harbour of Newport. Praying that the people under his command might not be Permitted to come on shore without some Good and Known officer over them in order to Restrain them from Committing Damage or offering any injury or insult to the Good and Peaceable People of this town."

And on June 29, 1781, it was necessary to make another complaint as follows:

Jamestown at a town Meeting called and held in the said town.

June 29, A. D. 1781

"Whereas it is represented to this meeting that the Sailors belonging to his most Christian Majesties fleet in the harbor of Newport, and those in



the hospitals in this town, frequently pass through the Meadows and fields of Grain in the daytime, & in the Night Season are Patrolling the town throwing their fences & Walls down by which some of the Inhabitants has received Greate Damage & more is likely to insue if not speedily prevented.

It is Therefore Voted that Benjamin Underwood & John Weeden be appointed to prepare a Remonstrance petition or address to the Admiral & General of the french Troop in the Land and Sea Service in behalf of the town Praying that their Troops may be Restrained and Prevented from passing through the lands and fields of Grain, throwing their Walls and fences down or Doing Damage to the Good and Wholesome People of the town: and that Aaron Sheffield be desired to Present the address to the Admiral and General of the French Army and Navy."

After seven years of conflict the war was drawing to a close. The French forces were to leave Newport and co-operate with Lafayette in the south. General Washington desired to confer with the French Admiral and also to witness the departure. He left his camp near New York City, came up the old Indian trail through Connecticut to South Ferry where he took the old sailboat ferry to Jamestown, landing on the west shore of the island at about the same place as the ferry now lands, in the early afternoon of March sixth. Crossing the island he was met by the French officers at the East Ferry, where the admiral's barge was awaiting to convey him to the French war vessel "Duc de Bourgoyne," where he was received by Count Rochambeau.

In commemoration of this visit of our greatest citizen, the local chapter of the D. A. R., during the Washington Celebration last summer, placed a marker on the road, which will be a reminder to all those now driving from ferry to ferry that they are traveling the same road that General Washington took when he crossed the island.

On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, and the war was over. During these years of conflict there was a common purpose which bound the people together, and there were few indeed who, either directly or indirectly, had not taken a part in this struggle. But now each person, each family, each community began to think of their own condition. The spirit of nationalism disap-

peared with the British armies. The immediate struggle for a livelihood was the great concern of all. There were the few years of prosperous activity which always follow a great war, but these were followed by a great financial panic. Taxes were exorbitant and general conditions so bad that thousands of farmers deserted their farms to start over again in a new locality. The great movement to "go west" had started.

But no matter what the conditions were throughout the country, Jamestown could have been no worse off than it was, for Jamestown was not only ruined, it was practically depopulated. Those who remained were farmers and their only hope for a living was to get it out of the ground. This they resolutely set out to do. Sheep provided meat and wool, spinning wheels were always humming making yarn, the hand looms wove blankets and the cloth which was cut up and made into clothes. They also grew flax and wove their own linens. Pigs provided hams, which were smoked with corn-cobs and cured by hand, sausage, lard and mince pies; apples were cut up and dried and also made into cider; geese provided meat and feathers for feather beds. The milk house of an average farm in early winter would reveal a side or two of beef and mutton, many bags of sausage, tubs of butter and lard, bags of dried apples and a hundred or more mince pies which, with the potatoes, turnips, carrots, cabbages and the barrel of cider in the cellar, had to carry them through the winter. All the cooking was done in an open fireplace or the brick oven, and sweeping was done with turkey wings. The men spent their days cultivating the fields, raising and harvesting the crops, tending the cattle and chopping wood. The women prepared the meals, tended the house, wove cloth, knitted stockings, made clothes and found time to make samplers and do embroidery. The evenings were illuminated by candles dipped or moulded of mutton fat.

The farm seemed to provide everything except boots and shoes. The itinerant shoe maker made his yearly visits and

stayed at the house while making the shoes. The following bill covering one such visit is worthy of preservation:

To making your boots	\$2.00
To soling Mary	.34
To making your youngest	.29
To mending black girl	.16
To mending your son	.21
To mending your wife	.06

Such was the life on the average Jamestown farm for four generations after the Revolutionary War. The only market for farm produce was Newport, so as Newport prospered, Jamestown had a little more real money with which to buy things.

The next activity came with the Civil War. At this time the 3rd Rhode Island Cavalry was encamped on the island and barracks were built. After the war these were sold, and A. Crawford Greene, of Providence, purchased one which he used for a summer residence. In this humble way did Jamestown start as a summer resort. Gradually others came. Among the first from afar were several Quaker families from Philadelphia. Today, aside from a few farms at the north and south ends of the island, Jamestown is a summer resort. There are several hotels which provide for those who prefer hotel life; cottages, large or small, can be rented for the season; and there are many beautiful residences which have been built by those who are permanent summer residents.

In the main the history of Jamestown follows the history of New England, but it is the little things in life that make for individuality, and so we find the intimate history of Jamestown possessing an allurements all of its own.

(In printing this article, I wish to express my indebtedness to Miss Lena Clarke, of Jamestown, for her untiring efforts in searching and copying the original records.)



THE KING TOM HOUSE

*Courtesy of Mr. J. H. Richardson*

When the Society of the Colonial Dames published *Old Houses in the South County of Rhode Island*, no photograph of the King Tom house was located. Since then Mr. Richardson has kindly contributed the photograph which is printed above.



## Genealogical Notes

By EDWARD H. WEST

(Continued from page 61)

### WILLIAM POTTER

Since my discovery of Ann (Talman) Brayton's marriage to William Potter, I have been searching out facts about William Potter and find that the Durfee book and Austin are both wrong, as there was but one William Potter.

Austin gives two William Potters, one the husband of — Talman, the other the husband of Ann Durfee. He *presumes* that Ann Potter was the daughter of Thomas Durfee, as he left her a legacy.

In the will of Thomas Durfee, he calls his children either son or daughter, but does not call Ann Potter daughter. One must not forget that Thomas Durfee and Ann Talman, the mother of Ann Durfee, were at least very great friends, so he probably remembered Ann Potter as a favorite of his.

Austin also says that William and Ann (Durfee) Potter sold land in 1697 to William Burrington and in 1720 he deeded to William Potter, Jr., all his land in Portsmouth.

Let us see what the Land Evidence Book really says.

The first deed will not tell us anything as it was some land that was granted to William Potter in 1694. In March 1703-4 William and Ann Potter mortgaged to Isaac Lawton the land that had belonged to Stephen Brayton, dec., the first husband of Ann Talman. In 1713-4 William and Ann Potter quitclaimed to their son and son-in-law, Stephen Brayton, the above mentioned land.

In 1707, Preserved Brayton sold to William Potter the land that had been granted to Ann Potter, his mother, for him, then a minor, in 1694. This was the 12 acres that William Potter sold to William Potter, Jr., in 1720.

In 1721, William Potter, mariner, and wife, Prudence Potter, mortgaged this same 12 acres to the Colony. In 1727, William Potter, mariner, and wife, Prudence, sold this same land to William Earl.

In the original vital records, not the printed ones, is written: "Nathaniel Potter (the son of William Potter and Ann his wife) was married to Ruth Manchester (the daughter of Stephen Manchester and Elizabeth his wife) by William Coggeshall Ass't. 1712."

"The births of the children of the above said Nathaniel Potter and Ruth his wife:—Elizabeth Potter born 2 May 1713; Ruth Potter born 14 October 1715."

"William Potter (son of the above said William Potter and Ann his wife) was born 11 March 1696."

The Durfee Book mentions the wills of John Fish and his wife Joanna, recorded in 1742 and 1744, in which mention is made of their daughter, Mary, the wife of William Potter. These wills are not recorded in Portsmouth.

The marriage of William Potter and Prudence — is not recorded either. As he was a mariner, he may have married her in some port at which he touched and brought her to Portsmouth.

Who the Prudence Potter was that married John Williams of Stonington, Conn., (Original Record) I have not yet been able to discover.

#### An Unrecorded Marriage.

"William Hall & Benjamin Hall of Portsmouth - - - - - Testifyeth - - - - that at or about the 20th Day of August 1748, they - - - - were Present at the house of the sd William Hall at Portsmouth, when Benjamin Turner, then a Resident of Newport and a native of Great Britain, was married - - - - unto Rebecca Tallman of Tiverton by Benjamin Tucker Esq. then an Assistant - - - - -"

The above Deposition was Sworn too before me this 5 Day of August 1783." John Thurston, J.P.

(Town Council Records, VII - 55.)

## The Minutes of the Westconnaug Purchase

*Transcribed by* THEODORE G. FOSTER

*(Continued from page 36)*

At a Meeting of the Committee and Proprietors at Warwick July 14<sup>th</sup> 1715 Whereas Thomas Field was admitted a Share in Westquanaug at a Proprietors Meeting at Kingston the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1706/7 but he not then accepting the said Admittance and not paying his proportion of the Charge that hath accrued We declare the said Grant to be void . . . Notwithstanding for some particular Service he hath done the Proprietors We do now grant him half a Lot joining upon N<sup>o</sup> 4 he paying his proportionable part of the Charge that hath accrued . . . It is agreed forthwith to draw Lots for the First Division from N<sup>o</sup> 1. to 29 according to the Plat laid before us by Josiah Westcoat Surveyor and the Lot that any Person shall draw the Division on the Plat being of the same Number with his said Lot shall be his Right and Property to improve as his Real Estate to him and his Heirs forever —————

And it is further Ordered that Such Person as shall draw any of the Numbers 1 to 8 shall have their first choice of the next Division of Lands in Westquanaug the Lot N<sup>o</sup> 12 to be included: Zachariah Rhodes Lot N<sup>o</sup> 29 is allowed him as his Fathers share without drawing his Lot all the Rest of the Lands not now called for shall be further Divided among the Proprietors . . . . ordered by their Trustees—————

---

At a Meeting of the Committee & Proprietors of Westquanaug at Warwick at the House of Mary Carder July the 14<sup>th</sup> 1715

Ordered that the Proprietors come to a New Choice of a Committee and Clerk and Treasurer who are Chosen as followeth

/Viz/

COL SAMUEL CRANSTON

Major James Brown

Capt Benjamin Ellery

Job Greene

Mayor Joseph Whipple

Mr Richard Waterman

Major Thomas Fenner

Job Greene Clerk and engaged

Major Thomas Fenner Treasurer

} Committee

Voted that the committee shall have full Power to make choice of a Surveyor to lay out the Remaining part of the Purchase of Westquanauge and to proceed in that Affair as soon as may be with convenience and to act and do any other Business that they shall think needful for the Proprietors Interest in the said Purchase

Voted That each whole Share Man shall pay unto Major Thomas Fenner Treasurer Twenty Shillings apiece forthwith towards paying the Charge of Surveying and other incident Charges that may arise about the Premises and each Man claiming a Smaller Share shall pay a proportionable Part accordingly

Whereas Thomas Weaver of Newport has sold half a Share of Westquanaug without acquainting the Proprietors or Trustees thereof and neglecting to pay his Proportion of the incidental Charges he is directed to pay his Proportion into the Hands of some one of the Trustees before the next Meeting and then make his Acknowledgment and show good Reason for his Breach of Covenant or else his Half Share so Sold is to be forfeited to the Proprietors.

Signed per order    Job Greene    Clerk<sup>(16)</sup>

At a Meeting of the committee of Westquanauge at the House of Mrs. Mary Carder in Warwick October 29<sup>th</sup> 1717—

Ordered That Mr Resolved Waterman is chosen a committee Man in the Room and Place of Mr Joseph



Whipple he having sold all his Interest in said Purchase and Waterman having bought a Share in said Purchase——

---

Providence May 28. 1718 Ordered that Capt Richard Waterman shall be Treasurer in the Room of Major Thomas Fenner Deceased and that he demand and receive the Treasurer Money into his Hand of the Executor for the Use of the Proprietors——

Ordered That Capt Thomas Harris shall be a committee Man in the Place and Room of Major Fenner Deceased he having purchased Land in said Purchase——

---

At a Meeting of the Committee of Westquanaug at Providence May the 28<sup>th</sup> 1718.

Having received a Return of the Running and Revising of the Lines between Between Providence and Westquanaug and the Colony Line and Warwick Line by the Persons appointed for that Purpose they having made many Remarks in said Lines [*illegible*] in order for a further Division whereupon it is jointly agreed on by the committee of the Main Land that there be a Second Division of one Hundred and Fifty Acres at the least to [*illegible*] whole share Man and Addition where the Land is mean to make them equal with the best Land——The Second Division to be laid out to the Eastward of the colony Line and it is ordered that Major Job Greene Capt Thomas Harris and Ensign Resolved Waterman shall be overseers to see the Work done and to agree with Josiah Westcoat Surveyor to be the principal Surveyor in the Work and to make a Map of it. Also the Trustees are to him sufficient Help to compleat the Work and the whole Charge to be paid by the Proprietors at the Drawing the Lots—And it is further ordered that the Trustees may lay out a Third Division to the Westward of the Colony Line if they see cause so to do adjoining to said Line

Job Greene	}	Committee
Thomas Harris		
Richard Waterman		
Resolved Waterman		

Joshua Winsor is chosen a committee Man in the Room and  
 Stead of Resolved Waterman Deceased

pr Job Greene Clerk<sup>16a</sup>

At a Meeting of the Proprietors of Westquanaug at the  
 House of M<sup>rs</sup> Mary Carder in Warwick November the  
 fourth 1718 . .

There being a Map presented by the Committee of  
 said Westquanaug of a Second Division within the Colony  
 Lines and one Division to the Westward of said Colony  
 Line to each Proprietor:—Ordered to draw Lots of said  
 Second Division according to former Order and also Unan-  
 imously agreed on to draw Lot for to the westward of the  
 Colony Line also both said Divisions were drawn accord-  
 ingly But there arising some Dispute between Nicholas  
 Carr and the Rest of the Grand Children of Gov<sup>r</sup> Caleb  
 Carr of Newport Deceased about Carr's Right said Grand  
 Children claiming equal Right with said Nicholas Carr:  
 The Proprietors taking the Matter into Consideration have  
 ordered that Carr's Alotments shall be placed to the  
 original Right of said Gov<sup>r</sup> Carr deceased——

And it is also ordered that Fones's Lotments be placed  
 in the original Right of capt John Fones Deceased by the  
 free Consent of his Son John Fones—there having been  
 some dispute before the Proprietors about the same by  
 Fones's Son and Grand Children——<sup>16b</sup>

Ordered Whereas there was a Mistake in Greene's  
 Right in the Second Division That Lotment having no  
 orderly Draft with the Rest notwithstanding N<sup>o</sup>. 47 was  
 left undrawn for by Reason of the Said Mistake Therefore  
 It is Ordered that Major Job Green may take up the same  
 Number of Acres that is in N<sup>o</sup>. 47 in any part of the undi-  
 vided Land by Consent of the Committee off the Main  
 Land for himself and Brothers and Richards Daughters if

he do not like Number 47 and Number 47 to be laid down to the Proprietors again

---

p Job Greene Clerk

---

### Advertisement

These are to give Notice to all the Proprietors of the Land known by the Name of Westquanaug within the Jurisdiction of Scituate<sup>(17)</sup> in the County of Providence in the Colony of Rhode Island &c to meet together on the First Tuesday of July next which will be the second Day of said Month at the House of Mr<sup>s</sup> Mary Carder in Warwick in said County in order to hear the Proceedings of the Committee in Laying out said Land and to receive from the Surveyor the PLAT of the Several Divisions of said Land and to pay the Several incidental Charges which have accrued from the Last Meeting of said Proprietors and to act and Do any other Business that the said Proprietors shall think needful about the Premises

Warwick June the 7<sup>th</sup> 1734 By order of the Committee  
per Mr Job Greene Clerk of said Proprietors

---

<sup>16</sup>Joseph Fry of Newport sold to Stephen Easton of Newport the half part of a share or sixtieth part of the Westquanaug Purchase, May 31, 1716. (R. I. Land Ev. III, 243.)

<sup>16a</sup>On June 9, 1718, John Rhodes of Warwick sold to John Turner a half share of the "Westquodnaig" purchase which was half of a partnership "with my uncle Peleg Rhodes." (Prov. Deeds, IV, 72.)

<sup>16b</sup>Capt. John Fones in his will Feb. 14, 1703, left one half of his Westconnaug purchase to his son John, and divided the other half between his son Samuel and his grandson Fones Greene. (N. Ki. Wills.)

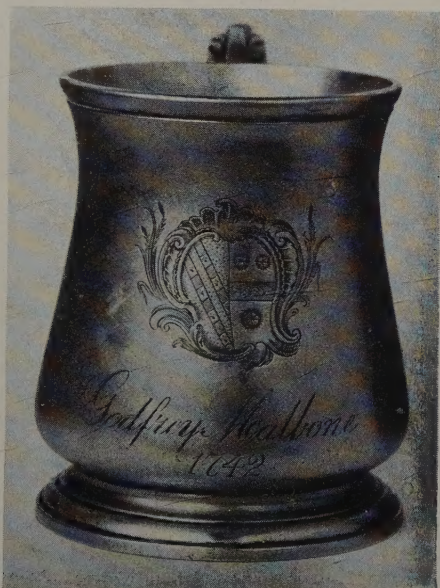
<sup>17</sup>On Feb. 20, 1730-1 the Town of Scituate was incorporated. All of the Westconnaug Purchase that was within Rhode Island was included in Scituate.

## Heraldic Notes

MALBONE

*Antiques* for February 1933, contains an illustration of a silver mug engraved with a coat-of-arms and the words *Godfrey Malbone, 1742*. This mug is now owned by the

Reverend Malbone H. Birckhead of Wynnewood, Penna. The arms are an impaled coat, *or two bendlets compony gules and ermine* for Malbone impaling *argent on a fess between three catherine wheels as many lambs passant*, for Scott. The color of the wheels and lambs is not discernible in the illustration.



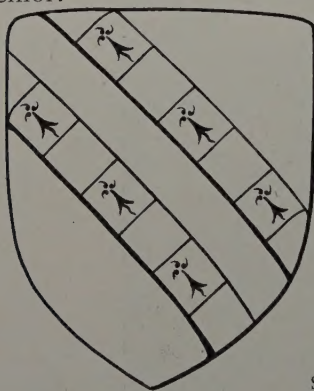
Silver mug which belonged to Godfrey Malbone of Newport.  
It is owned by the Rev. Malbone H. Birckhead.

Courtesy of "Antiques"

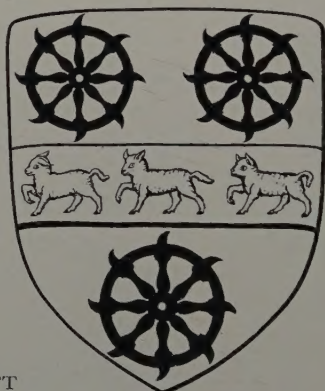
E. Alfred Jones in *Antiques* describes the Malbone arms as *Or two bendlets gobony ermine and gules* and adds that "The arms of Malbone were granted in 1683 to George Malbon of Bradley in the county of Chester." Burke does not give this coat but gives *Or two bends gobonated argent and gules*. Ormerod in his *History of Chester*, III, 318, states that the ancient arms of the Malbons of Bradeley Hall, *Or two bendlets componé argent and gules* "were dis-



allowed by Dugdale in the visitation of 1663-4." The change from argent to ermine may have been for difference or more probably someone mistook diapering for ermine and so accidentally made a differenced coat. The impaled arms are those of Scott and as Godfrey Malbone married Catherine Scott in 1719, the arms clearly represent this marriage and are the arms of Malbone impaling Scott, which would of course be the arms of Godfrey Malbone, Senior.



SCOTT



The arms of Scott, as engraved on the silver mug, are the same as those of Thomas Scott of Great Barr, in Staffordshire, as illustrated on page 299 of the 1724 edition<sup>(1)</sup> of Guillim's *Display of Heraldry*. In the text these arms are given as *Argent on a fess gules, cottised azure, three lambs of the first, between as many katherine-wheels sable*, but in the illustration the cottises are omitted. Dr. Bowditch suggests that the engraver may have merely turned to Guillim for a Scott coat, found that of Scott of Great Barr, Staffordshire, and then, overlooking the cottises in the description, copied Guillim's wood-cut. He may have shaded the fess for artistic effect.

The Catharine Scott who was married to Godfrey Malbone in 1719, was the daughter of John Scott and Elizabeth Wanton,<sup>(2)</sup> and so granddaughter<sup>(3)</sup> of John Scott and great-granddaughter of Richard Scott of Providence.

<sup>(1)</sup> Also in edition of 1679. <sup>(2)</sup> *R. I. Hist. Tracts* 3, pages 14 and 17.

<sup>(3)</sup> *Austin Gen. Dict. of R. I.*, pages 215, 372 and 373.



## FORM OF LEGACY

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